

## World observes earth hour

### Westin known to be lone participant in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Earth Hour was observed worldwide, turning off lights at 8:30pm for one hour yesterday, to send a powerful message to the global leaders about environmental awareness and caring for the planet.

On Earth Hour, hundreds of millions of people around the world came together to call for action on climate change.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) organised the movement and since its inception three years ago, Earth Hour has captured the world's imagination and become a global phenomenon.

The Westin Dhaka joined the initiative by turning off its

lights at 8:30pm local time for 60 minutes, a statement said.

"The Westin Dhaka participated in this social event. It was a demonstration of what we can do about climate change," said Atique Rahman, general manager of the Westin Dhaka.

"Earth Hour provides a global platform for millions of people to voice their concern about the devastating effects of climate change," said WWF Director General James Leape in a statement.

As the event launched, a record 125 countries and territories and over 4,000 cities, towns and municipalities had signed up to join the event.

## Zia was first president

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BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia attended the programme as chief guest, but did not speak.

Party's Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, who presided over the discussion, said Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7 speech was not a declaration of independence.

"Even Awami League leaders AK Khandaker, Major (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam and Subid Ali Bhuiyan in their books say Zia declared independence," he added.

The ruling AL is now creating confusion over the issue only to divert people's attention from the anti-government movement, he said.

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed said there is no room for causing confusion that Zia was the proclaimer of independence.

Rafiqul Islam Mian said Zia led the Liberation War, and Bangladesh gained independence under his leadership.

Mirza Abbas said the country's sovereignty is safe only in the hands of BNP, as Bangladesh became independent following Zia's declaration.

Sadeque Hossain Khoka said Zia not only declared independence but also took charge of the Bangladesh government.

"He is the proclaimer of independence and the country's first president," added the DCC mayor.

Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury said Zia in his declaration introduced himself as provincial head of the state.

He claimed he had read Zia's declaration several times, but could not preserve the document, as he had been arrested by the Pakistani army.

Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday said the government has started the process of war crimes trial

## Wasa

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After the installation of the pre-treatment unit, which would take a year, the residents of the city will get relief from the smelly supply water, said Liyakat.

According to the contract, Denmark will provide a loan worth around Tk 750 crore as a support for construction of the Syedabad Water Treatment Plant phase-2.

The phase-1 and Chandnighat water treatment plant supply about 22 crore and 4 crore litres of water against Wasa's total supply of about 190 crore litres a day. The rest come from 545 deep tubewells. The existing demand is over 220 crore litres a day.

It will take around Tk 3,000 to 3,500 crore to construct the Keraniganj treatment plant with a capacity of 45 crore litres a day, Liyakat said.

"We started a feasibility study with a cost of Tk 2 crore three months ago and it is expected to be completed in seven months," he said.

The water for this treatment plant will be brought in from Boilder Bazar of the Padma, he said.

A proposal has already been sent to the LGRD and cooperatives ministry and the government is now seeking foreign fund for the project.

A feasibility study for the Khilkhet water treatment plant, with a capacity of 50 crore litres a day, will be done soon under a Tk 1,465-crore project.

He said the plant will be constructed with an estimated cost of Tk 2,500 crore and water from the Meghna will be brought in for treatment.

## Experts to talk climate impacts in South Asia

BSS, Dhaka

A two-day international experts roundtable on the implications of climate change in South Asia begins in Dhaka city today.

Climate change experts and scientists from Norway, Germany, Britain, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh will attend the event.

The impacts of climate change are part of the daily reality for South Asia. Higher temperatures, more extreme weather patterns, melting glaciers, water scarcity and rising sea levels are now a common feature, a release said yesterday.

The roundtable is envisaged as the first step of a process to assess where the gaps in knowledge, understanding and institutional responses lie. Taking this process further could include research and dialogue through a series of workshops, seminars and networking.

This international expert roundtable is aimed to generate a critical discussion on the inter-linkages between climate change and conflict in South Asia. It will explore the implications of current and future climate impacts on security in South Asia.

The roundtable will also launch international Alert's latest report 'Climate Change, Conflict and Fragility'.

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, in collaboration with International Alert (UK), the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (Sri Lanka) and the Peace Building and Development Institute in Sri Lanka, is organising the roundtable.

only to weaken the opposition. "The trial after 40 years is to demean a certain quarter or party," he headed.

He was talking to reporters at Ziaur Rahman's grave, where he went to place wreaths with newly elected Supreme Court Bar Association leaders.

He said it would be suicidal if the government tries to repress the opposition in the name of trying the war criminals.

Sircar, also former speaker, however, said they will cooperate with the government if it holds the trial properly.

HUDAMA BNP VICE-CHAIRMAN Nazmul Huda has been made BNP's vice-chairman and Mir Mohammed Nasir Uddin a member of the party's advisory council.

A statement signed by the party's joint secretary general Rizvi Ahmed on Thursday said Khaleda Zia nominated the two under the authority given to her by the national council on December 8.

BNP now has 16 vice-chairmen and a 33-member advisory council.

Illegal billboards

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Led by DCC Magistrate Khalil Ahmed, a team of DCC officials was conducting the drive with assistance from Dhanmondi police.

Contacted, DCC Chief Town Planner Sirajul Islam said the city corporation decided to launch the drive at an emergency meeting following the High Court directives in this regard.

The High Court on March 22 directed DCC to start immediate removal of all unauthorised hoardings in the capital.

On March 15, two people were killed and eight injured at Gulshan-1 as a poorly-built hoarding collapsed on them during a storm.

Delhi

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Board Executive Engineer Motaher Hossain and Executive Engineer (mechanical) Abdul Hye would supervise the dredging work.

The first phase of the dredging would be done from Bornoberia to Pipili (11km) before the rainy season sets in. The second phase would start from November.

Goga Union Parishad Chairman Mostafizur Rahman said with dredged soil India has already started constructing a 35-foot-wide road-slash-embankment. He feared floods in Sharsha and adjacent areas during the monsoon for this reason.

Barapukuria

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year but the two companies did not hike it last February.

After the meeting the company at a press briefing said that it would hike miners' wages with effect from February this year in line with the 2008 agreement.

Quamruzzaman, managing director of BCMCL, said that the miners yesterday joined their works.

Meanwhile, law enforcers restored communications by removing trees from roads and rail tracks.

## Youth stabs

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Left to right, Aminur Rahman, Rokhsana Montaj, Fauzia Faria Barsha.

Holding Barsha at the knife point he gathered together all the inmates -- the couple, Barsha's elder sister Susan, and three domestic helps -- in the bedroom.

Ali told them that his armed gang members had confined the security of the building on the ground floor and some had taken position on the roof. He threatened with life if anyone played any trick.

Around 2:00am, Ali said he needed Tk 20 lakh and one of the two cars of Aminur to prove himself wealthy and marry Ishika.

Aminur, who is an export and import trader, signed a cheque for Tk 50,000 and assured of mediating for the marriage.

Beli said, Ali keeping a safe distance took meal along with the inmates around 2:30am and requested all to go to bed. He even begged pardon for his behaviour.

Ali took all mobile phone sets of the inmates and led Barsha to the sitting room, Beli said.

Around 4:40am, Beli found Barsha lying unconscious with stab injury to her head while Ali came out of the room and stabbed Rokhsana and Aminur.

As Barsha got back to consciousness, she cried out and along with her mother managed to go down stairs.

Beli said, Ali then went out to

catch them but wrongly he went to the upstairs. After a few minutes of search, he went downstairs.

The domestic helps locked the second floor from inside.

Security guard Jasim of the house told The Daily Star that Barsha and her mother with stab injuries rushed to him at the ground floor around 5:00am. Within seconds Ali came down and rushed to the maingate.

On hearing Ali's footstep Barsha and her mother along with Jasim took shelter on the first floor.

Ali made attempt to break open the gate but failed. He then went to the rooftop, climbed down by sewerage pipe and escaped, Beli said.

A few minutes later, Jasim with the help of others took the injured to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Officer-in-Charge AKM Shaheen Mandol of Kalabagan Police Station said the foolishness of the inmates led to the horrific incidents as they allowed Ali after his begging pardon to stay in the house.

He added Ali might have "a bit of mental disorder" but after his arrest the motive would be revealed.

## Two hijack car in Gulshan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two carjackers stole a private car in the city's Gulshan area on Friday.

Police could not recover the silver colour car as of last night.

The owner of the car is an NBR high official. His wife and World Bank's sanitation expert Rokeya Ahmed filed a case with the Gulshan Police Station in this connection.

Investigation officer of the case SM Tuhin said they had suspected car driver Jamal first, but after primary interrogation he was cleared of the suspicion.

Jamal was waiting in front of the LabAid Hospital in Gulshan-2 after dropping Rokeya's two children at the hospital when the two criminals hijacked the car holding a machete at him, police said quoting Jamal.

The officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station said they are conducting operations to recover the car.

Local sources said incidents of carjacking are frequently taking place in Gulshan area and the vehicles are not recovered most of the time.

## GULSHAN MURDER Killers still at large

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An 'accomplice' of the two absconding accused in Wednesday's double murder at Gulshan in the capital was arrested yesterday.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) tracked him down at Tongi in Gazipur.

Rab identified the arrestee as Delwar Hossain Dipu, a close friend of the accused on the run -- Rubel and Mithun. Delwar is a private university student, and a resident of the city's Kuril area.

Meanwhile, family members of schoolgirl Iri, whose parents were shot dead by the accused, continued to get death threats from Rubel for filing case against them.

Contacted, officials of Rab-1 said Delwar told them that Rubel, Mithun, two others and he had met on Tuesday night at Kalachandpur where the murders were committed. Rab however declined to give details.

Officer-in-Charge of Gulshan Police Station Kamal Uddin said Rab handed over the arrestee to them yesterday afternoon.

Delwar's name is mentioned in the first information report of the case as an accomplice of the two accused. He is being interrogated, said the OC.

Rubel shot Iri's parents Sadeque Rahman and Romana Nargis dead in their flat at Kalachandpur as they declined to marry their daughter off to him.

Iri's relative Eshaq Khan said Rubel is threatening over mobile phones that all her family members would be killed as they have filed case against him. "They (family members) are now staying at their village home in Laxmipur, and are feeling insecure there too," he said.

They have given police and Rab the numbers of mobile phones used for giving death threats, he added.

Larger ADP

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of the projects may be included in the current ADP while most would be carried over to the next year's.

The government also plans to increase public investment. On a number of occasions, the finance minister has said they want to take the public investment beyond 20 percent from below 15 percent at present.

M Hafizuddin Khan, former finance adviser of caretaker government, described the government's ADP planning for the next fiscal year as over-ambitious.

"First, let the government implement Tk 28,500 crore [revised ADP]. Only then it will be rational to go for an even grander development plans," he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hafizuddin also said this government seems to be pursuing a traditional approach -- taking up a big ADP only to slash it short, and finally failing to implement even the revised one. This is not pragmatic.

"Our deficiency in different sectors including infrastructure, energy and power calls for a huge public expenditure. But implementation efficiency has to be increased."

As the government has been speaking of politics of change, it should have formed a high-powered committee to identify the problem areas, added the former adviser.

## US offers legal argument for drone strikes

AFP, Washington

The US government for the first time has offered a legal justification of its drone strikes against al-Qaeda and Taliban militants, citing the right to "self-defence" under international law.

The CIA attacks by unmanned aircraft in Pakistan, Somalia and elsewhere have sharply increased under President Barack Obama's administration but have remained shrouded in secrecy, with some human rights groups charging the bombing raids amount to illegal assassinations.

Broaching a subject that has been off-limits for official comment, State Department legal advisor Harold Koh laid out the legal argument for the strikes in a speech late Thursday, referring to "targeting" of al-Qaeda and Taliban figures without mentioning Pakistan or where the raids are carried out.

The United States was in "an armed conflict" with al-Qaeda, the Taliban and its affiliates as a result of the September 11 attacks, Koh said, "and may use force consistent with its inherent right to self-defence under international law."

"With respect to the subject of targeting, which has been much commented upon in the media and international legal circles, there are obviously limits to what I can say publicly," he told a conference of the American Society of International Law.

"What I can say is that it is the considered view of this administration -- and it has certainly been my experience during my time as legal adviser -- that US targeting practices, including lethal operations conducted with the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, comply with all applicable law, including the laws of war."

The CIA would not comment on the speech, posted on the State Department website, but told AFP: "The Agency's counterterrorism operations are conducted in strict accord with the law."

Rights activists and some legal experts charge the drone strikes in Pakistan and other countries, outside of a traditional battlefield, amount to extrajudicial executions that violate both international and US law.

Koh, a fierce critic of former president George W Bush's policies before he took his post, disagreed -- saying a US ban on government sanctioned assassinations did not apply.

Under US law, "the use of lawful weapons systems -- consistent with the applicable laws of war -- for precision targeting of specific high-level belligerent leaders when acting in self-defence or during an armed conflict is not unlawful, and hence does not constitute 'assassination,'" he said.

He also argued that the US government was not obliged to offer legal rights to the militant figures targeted in the strikes as the United States was at war and acting in self-defence.

Koh said the government was careful to limit attacks to only "legitimate" military objectives and to ensure attacks adhered to the principle of "proportionality."

No work

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The decision came after a condolence meeting and conference of Sylhet chapter BCS (Education) Association.

The association also decided to contribute financial help to the victim's family.

Chairman of the Association Professor Fahima Khatun, also Chairman of Dhaka Education Board, attended the occasion, as chief guest while Secretary General Masum A Rabbani was a special guest.

Principal of the college Prof Nazrul Haque Chowdhury presided over the meeting.

Later, they took out a mourning procession in the city.

Associate Professor Harun Ur Rashid was stabbed to death by a gang of criminals near his rented house in the city last Sunday afternoon.

Police caught 3 suspects in connection with the murder.

keeping civilian casualties to a minimum.

Civilian deaths from the drone war have triggered popular anger and fed anti-US sentiment in Pakistan.

Pakistan publicly criticises the targeted assassination but quietly cooperates with the Americans, analysts say, with Islamabad allowing the use of an air base on Pakistani soil -- a detail a US senator accidentally let slip at a hearing last year.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which recently filed a lawsuit demanding the government disclose its legal rationale, welcomed the justification.

"We're encouraged that Koh has articulated the legal rationale for the programme," said Jonathan Manes, a legal fellow at the ACLU.

But he said he hoped the administration would provide a more detailed account of its legal justification.

The ACLU, under freedom of information laws, has asked the government to reveal when, where and against whom drone strikes can be authorised, as well as an estimate of how many civilians have been killed in the raids.

At a congressional hearing on Tuesday, a law professor from American University urged the administration to argue its case for drone strikes publicly or else put CIA officers at greater risk of prosecution in foreign courts.

## 12 hurt as train hits human hauler

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 12 people were injured as a train hit a human hauler at Azampur Kitchen Market level crossing in the city's Dakhin Khan area last night around 9:00pm.

The injured were the passengers of the human hauler.

Two of the injured were admitted to Care Point Hospital in the area while the rest were given first aid.

Injured Nurul Amin said all passengers in the human hauler narrowly escaped death as they got off it before a Kamalapur-bound train ramed into it.

Sub-inspector Mezbaul Alam of Government Railway Police Station said one road gatekeeper was on duty when Parabat Express from Sylhet hit the vehicle.

He also said the driver and helper of the vehicle fled the scene soon after the accident.

## Disrupt trial

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"However, we are not afraid of any plot by the defeated force. In the past also whenever we began the process of any people task, the evil force had created impediments. But, we could foil their plots and had been successful in completing our tasks," Hasina said.

She said after the liberation Bangabandhu had started his endeavour to bring about the economic emancipation of the people, but the defeated force killed him on August 15, 1975.

"After Bangabandhu's assassination, his killers and the war criminals were politically rehabilitated and even made Members of Parliament by their patrons. The nation now wants to erase such stigma," she said.

"Inshallah, we will complete the trial of the war criminals and free the nation from the stigma," Hasina added.

The PM reminded that the vested quarters are out to divert the public mind by talking about power and gas crisis, prices of essentials, etc.

"But what they have done for the people when they were in state power? Why they did not add even a single megawatt of electricity to the national grid, why they had increased price of rice from Tk 10 to Tk 45?" she posed questions.

Syed Ashraf urged the people to remain alert about activities of the vested groups who in disguise of "friend" are out to misguide the people.

AL presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury presided over the discussion while AL presidium members Sheikh Selim and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury addressed the meeting.